

## THE LETTER REBUS (PART 3)

A. ROSS ECKLER  
Morristown, New Jersey

*Editor's Note: This article continues the survey of the letter rebus begun in the February 1984 Word Ways; readers should refer to that issue for a general discussion including taxonomy.*

### Relative Position of Rebus Letters to Each Other (Continued)

Further examples of words indicating position above include:

DisProof 74, Proof boxes 83  
surMisE 29  
SUPERimposed 51  
acros\*Tic\*S 36, LacrosseE 37  
nickelod\*Eon 83 [load on]  
the Band Played\* on 63, DandElion\*S 75  
ONE is superior to the OTHER 58, superior WisConSin USA 58  
Pontooned 65, periodontoSis 80  
HERbert hOover 73  
slipCoverS 81  
a BaD hangover toDaY 81  
jamES MonROE 73  
GROover head 82  
WaGonS-lit 75  
THalidOmide 75  
Flies over the seAs 58  
Flights overseas\* 77  
aVAcant apartMeNT upstairs 79  
make up theiR MinDS 80  
CATAmount 80, mountEbanK 83

There are numerous rebuses with a stack using two ons, but apparently no one has bothered to construct a stack of three, despite the existence of words such as cONfrONtation.

To indicate below, one has the following vocabulary:

MisunderSTandinGS 23, FLOunderS 23, SunderS 26  
round underneath the MOon 36, underneath the PlanO 51  
upS and downS 25, upSIDE down 26, Hand-ME-down 30  
DOWN beneath the WILLOW 42, Be beneath you\* 53  
SneathS 29, One at hOME 29  
six degrees below zero 27, FURbelowING 51, below PAR 70  
topS and bottomS 25, HEPatopHLEbotom\*Y 62, copper bottomS 80  
at the bottom of the BaY 39, AT the bottom of the sea\* 52  
highFlowN 26, SWALlow 27, overFlow BASin 29  
SaY it with FlowerS 27, Flower Lover 37  
EARS lowered 80

the netherLandS 39  
 overCrowDED subWaYS 40, subFUSC 65, lAMbus 77 [suber]  
 EaVESdropped 44  
 ONE is inferior to the OTHER 58  
 SeLF-abasement 80

A rather similar vocabulary is used to indicate letters diagonally up or down from each other:

sign OF fall 82  
 ConeFlower 23, BlowerS 49, when KnighTHood WAS in Flower 51  
 SlowS up 25, Pro\*Io\*Cu\*to\*Rs 27, lowLandS 29  
 CoffEE 27, Flies off the HandLED 30  
 OUTLawry 54  
 SWanSdown 28, SIT down in front 48, WatERship down 74  
 Dazed Campers and then dropped letterS 34  
 eye\*dropS 74, dropPinGS 76, HYdropath 82  
 niagara RAPidS 39 [suber]  
 YES depress YOUR dimmer switchES 73  
 gasOline linES 74 [suber]  
 A raised and sunken SYstem 75, sinkYoneS 79  
 A subscriptlon RatE 79  
 under six Flags 81, THunder on the left 39  
 HUT at the foot of a HILL 62  
 REConsideR 56, under ConsideRaTlon 41  
 Lover'S right 28, after the Ball is over 43  
 LonG Stopover 55  
 raised the RafterS 68, BotH sides i arM 76 [suber]  
 night and DaY 56, Knight 38  
 DOWry 63  
 right off the BaT 51, vertical TAKEoff 70  
 EYesorE 81 [suber]  
 PUT up OR SHUT up 23, SlowS up 25, CatSup 26  
 highBrowS 31, highLand FLinGS 33  
 nighT-Blooming CereUS 32  
 closed MinDS MaDE up in advance 76  
 HE is upright .. 60, upright PlanO 48  
 A foe disputes ME not 72 [suber]  
 over AND above besideS 49  
 Stop in FOR a short viSit 72  
 great UnwAshed 80 [n.w.= northwest]  
 tenneSseE 73 [n.e. = northeast, s.e. = southeast]  $X_E^S$

The word in can be embodied in a rebus in many different ways. The usual method is to center a letter (or letter group) inside a horizontal sequence of letters:

TMT: MinTs 24, TUNE: UNinTEresting 27, TFLY: FLinTY 26  
 CCDCC: in the midst of the Crowd 55, TlNGSH: midst of THINGS 63  
 URTND: midURNDist 74 ["my durndest"]  
 APYRL: PYRamidALis 37, ECETS: aCETamidES 42, AAEEA: admiAsE 59  
 RDO: in the middle of the ROaD 57  
 STOS: rightS and leftS TO the midsection 46  
 CBLET: intraCTaBLE 57

|II|: Is midway between the sidelines 67  
 -ING-: readING between the lines 43  
 DEBECKS: BEtween DECKS 25  
 STSASDY: SAint SwithinS DaY 28, WAGTANCEDLK: within WALKinG  
 NLI DiStANCE 55  
 A : interNatlonAL 39  
 ITHNS: insert THIN soleS 40 ITN : inside INformatIon 47  
 NCCOE: COincid\*eNCE 26, I : inside INformatIon 47  
 EVE: innerVatEs 44, TD8: Dinner aT eight 81  
 XCEDl: intoXICatED 69, ELECEDVEN: intoXICatED 80, SH BOEX: SHE  
 dropped a letter into the BOX 39  
 DTE: DEcentralisT 62, DEDE: DEcenterED 73  
 Ill D Hudson: of tIme and the river 42  
 8W8: middleWeights 29, SPO: middle Platter Of ormerS 83  
 MLN: the interior LineMeN 70  
 STPES: the President of the united StAtES 72

In addition, there are a considerable number of rebuses using a verb followed by the word in: LCHUR: left in the LURCH 49, DRTI A: robert inDIana 83, OEO: Obispo pinE 81, GLS: shoveLinG Snow 83, SEGLWS: SparkLinG WinEs 74, FSE: inFEstationS 74, ETAD: enterTAINED 58, SCGAF: SCAfoldinG 79, SUGBER: niGgard 80 [suber], REBUSS: stuffinEss 83, GOOG: stampinG Grounds 81.

The insertion of a letter can be done vertically instead, using many of the same synonyms for in:

|                                    |  |                        |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| ---                                |  | C                      |
| ING: read ING between the lines 64 |  | TENT: inConSisTENT 56  |
| ---                                |  | S                      |
| G                                  |  | C                      |
| WD: GonE with the WinD 71          |  | BLE: inConsideRaBLE 59 |
| E                                  |  | R                      |
| A                                  |  | E                      |
| HEF: HE Flies through the AIR.. 40 |  | S: theY have SinCE     |
| I                                  |  | S                      |
| R                                  |  | Y                      |
|                                    |  | made up 83             |

However, some rebus constructors use only the first two letters of a longer sequence to surround the letters in question, as in F  
 ECMENT: solitary ConFinEMENT 27.

One can alternate one set of letter with another;

WSOHLEVEEPS: SHEEP in the midst of WOLVES 77  
 AFTME: eFFeMinATE 23, AWPOPRLME: a WORM in an APPLE 31  
 AAGLELS: ALL through the AGES 55  
 DAUESRTORY: AERO space inDUSTRY 72  
 MJAAICDKS: JACK among the MAIDS 75  
 DrEoEyR: ROYal tern ate with kill DEER 83

Furthermore, one can surround a letter with four or more other letters to clue the word in:

|                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| C                         | P S P                            |
| DVI: aVis inDICA 26       | S L I S : Lles* in the SPring 57 |
| A                         | P S P                            |
| U                         | ADO                              |
| OBT: roundaBOUTS 25       | D D: much ADO about nothing 25   |
| S                         | ODA                              |
| H E                       | SOM                              |
| S : HEREaboutS 34         | EWN: WinSOMENESS 41              |
| R E                       | ESS                              |
| I                         | DDDD                             |
| ISI: ones surroundingS 28 | DWLD                             |
| I                         | DLWD: all around the WorLD 27    |
|                           | DDDD                             |

In recent years, this technique has been supplanted by one that encloses letters in larger ones, notably G in words ending in -ing (see page 5 in the February issue).

Another nuance is created for in if the surrounding symbol can be readily split in two. This is achieved by replacing the letter W with UU (as in ULU: outside the LaW 60, UYU: midWaY), by an Arabic numeral (5T0: LaTin 77, 1P0: PinXit 81), or by a Roman numeral (1PV: Pinafore\* 49, D1D: one in a thousand 54).

All of these rebuses keep the letters being enclosed entirely separate from the letters performing the enclosing. However, this need not always be the case; a letter can be counted as part of the enclosing set (shown in quotes for clarity):US: Sin'US'itis 27, T: Tin'TYPE' 21, DAHOMEY: a HOME in the country 83, FORMATION: Misin'FORMATION' 30, BRAN: RAisin 'BRAN' 48, E ER: Easin'ESS A Y'EaR 82, POWHATAN: WHAT's in a name, TEA: in'T\*'Eresting 32. A related rebus is illustrated by BILLS: Sends the 'BILLS' 45.

Shifting one's viewpoint, one can, instead of using in, describe the act of placing letters around a letter by a combination of the follow right and precede left operations described previously:

DSIE: inSIDE out 29, SGT: outSTandinG 40, SLIH: outLandISH 47  
 YMEE COO: without ME YE Can dO nothing 40  
 SHAFROEKES: splitting SHAKES with a FROE  
 ARN: AN outsider 37, ULU: outside the LaW 60  
 OUES: inn\*UendOES 46, SBS: BadneSS 72 [suber]  
 HIGT: aroundIGHT 54, HOMER: One arM around HER 60  
 K1DOFRNG: a bout OF DRinKING 55, BITS: BoneS about IT 68  
 MpY: thorn in MY side 81  
 HERO: HOuseholder 82  
 XTY: oXYhemaTin 81  
 CLEBURNCLE: BURN the CandLE at both ends 58  
 XAX: chieftAin 83  
 AHUPEM: HE gets UP in the morning 76  
 NMil: MINIsirts 67  
 HCS: HandS across the C\* 72, X1TOX: O Tides a redness orca

net 73 [suber]

NAI: A red robin 75 [suber], DCAA: CanADA border 78

ÅUHS: until death do US part 82

The positional rebuses discussed in the past few pages are located in the standard position - halfway between the title and the verse below. More recently, rebus constructors have discovered how to incorporate the positional rebus in the title. Some examples:

B PREBUS  
RE US: the Bison theRE 75 IUM : extra PatRonIUM 79

REBCUS: night-Blooming CereUS 83 REBUSS: SinUSitis 83

TB

REDBUS: REload the BUS 78

Note that in every case the letters of REBUS play a role, with other letters added as needed.

Similarly, the positional rebus can appear in the verse below:

Ol: inverse propORTIon 83 E: onE another 72

RT

S

E

.. errors and PRIME,: undercapitalisM 82

DEB

..floating on air ...: DEBonAlR 82

A handful of negative positional rebuses have appeared. Two

GG GG G GGGGG

T TT T

very similar ones are HERBERT HOOVER: GovernoR 30 and GHIJKL: o-

H

Y

verHand KnoTs 72. Both C: topnotCH 73 and MO: MOnotonY 57 show

RP RS

the inverse of the negative statement. G gS : the GRandParent of five little GRandSonS 82 demonstrates the equivalence of aren't off and on. One rebus combines a negative statement with its title:

SUB R: MOnotonE 80.

OM

### Groups of Identical Letters

If the word or phrase describing the rebus contains the letter S, it is not uncommon to see the preceding letter presented two or more times in the rebus: IIIll: allles\* 21, WWW: theWs 22, RRRET: someRsET 22. In addition, the number of times a letter or symbol appears in the rebus can be specified. For single appearances, one has:

HoneY 22, oneIDA 25, won\*DER 25, byGoneS 23, BoneS 26

Nonesuch 61, Done such 61

singleT 22, singleHandED 25, singleD 26, singleTonS 35

Nonce 25, ConCeRTinAS 72, eNSConce 75

loneLinEsses 24, loneLY 25, lone HandS 29

A lonely afternoon 47, lonesomeR 27

aBalone 21, I'M alone 26, B: let her\* alone 37

soleN 22, Asole 46, MT: soleMni\*Ty\* 27, insert THlN soleS 40

soloisT 37, soloMonS 47, soloN 48

only theN 55, MatRonly 56, Sonly 60  
 see Amer\*lc\*A first 60, ON me rely 45, X: chimere 78  
 butanE 52, butChereD 48  
 solitary ConFinEMENT 27  
 justICE 22, aDjust 27, readjustS 25, just a Bit 51  
 ALASC S: in A CLASS by itself 43, I am by myself 66  
 aBalienated 21  
 individualisM 54

Rebus-makers have devised a very large number of ways to exhibit exactly two letters:

PPP<sub>0</sub>RR: Pro\*lo\*CU\*to\*Rs 27, SonG withOUt woRDs 58  
 double UP 22, a double Play 24, capital doubled 30, REdoubled 28  
 twiceR 33, singleHandED twice 45, XEXE: cross a 'Te' twice  
 anImated 23, Mismatched 35, HAMated 42  
 bothERs 24  
 eNtwinEs 24, twinERs 53, EAST wind\* 69, Atwain 28  
 match point 77, Mismatched 37, UNmatched 53  
 a pair of specs\* 29, a pair of black eyes\* 33, lmpaired 53  
 lbis 29, GOO: siblinG 73 [suber], c\*anNAbis 72, bishOP 76  
 TeachER DEparts 29, Beseech\* 35, AN underSTandinG TeachER 65  
 HH: mediate 72 [suber]  
 extraCT 33, extraORDinary 39, extraPOLate 70  
 Has a swell ash 69  
 Slow down There Where's the Flre pete\* 68  
 repeating FlrearM 47  
 repeatedLY 53, A repeated low Blow 59, repeated rightS .. 64  
 OO: sparr\*Ow\* 67  
 puRported 75 [suber]  
 TireprintS 53  
 TlTanotherlUM 52  
 presentaTlon copy 83  
 dualisM 25, dualAS 39, inDIVIdual 60, Cloud\*Y 72 [suber]  
 nearLY the same 70  
 OBLiterated 58, ALLiterated 61, SS: illiterateS 77  
 duplicated 40  
 STand againST 60, niagara faLLS 72 [suber], niagaRa 82 [suber]  
 Credo 83, SHoder 81 [suber]  
 DO DO : HAd it to DO over again 80  
 HA HA HA HA : LoudLY 38 [suber]  
 AA B: A gem in a tea Ball 78

Representations for three or more letters are less often encountered:

threePs 22, three jays\* together 65  
 a tripleX 22, tripleTs 25, EEE: tripol\*i\* 35  
 Wlth rice 59  
 elbertA 72 [suber], ENGelbert 78 [suber]  
 triCERatopS 67, KKK ISM: MIniSKirt 73 [suber]  
 Eternal 73  
 HistrIo 75  
 hol\*t rineHart WinSTon 80  
 WINter 33, terPsicHorE 72, HEH HEH HEH OO: HE\*terOcercal\* 34

UUUU: q\*Uartet 74 [suber]  
 for\*eNsic\* 24, Illl: four-eyes\* 24, for\*Ks 25  
 quadrupleTs 25  
 six of one and half a dozen of the other 75, sExisM 77 [suber]  
 the seven seas\* 35, TTTTTTT: seventies\* 81  
 Weight 29, eightHs 24, MaGNate\* 39, EEEEEEEEE: eighties\* 81  
 LEOnine 73  
 tenOsitis 28, DisContentED 29, OFtentimes 22  
 decuple 69

Unspecified repetitions of a letter or letter-group are clued by a variety of words:

SO many ,times 69, Dynamos 39 [suber], mani\*aC 27  
 l l: equallze\* 64  
 allles\* 21, all around the WorLD 27, all fives 34  
 someRsET 22, 8 am, 2 pm: sometimes 24, Handsome ls .. 26  
 likewise\* 24, Disliked 27  
 much ADO about nothing 25  
 polydeuces 28  
 Aloft 30, Soft 33, of tlme and the river 42, Soften 35  
 severallze\* 31  
 Discontinued 31  
 EEEEE: Esteem 32, SSSSS: eSteems 32  
 alloverish 83, aCTUal lover 79  
 Ghost 49  
 Sandlots 46  
 multipleX 38  
 SAY IT over and over again 62  
 Sever 72  
 massAc\*hu\*setts\* 34  
 ex-traPeze\* 68

One rebus achieved a repetition by negation: TTTTTTT clued **noT** alone in 1974. Although none of the above words implies a straight horizontal line, most were conventionally presented in that manner. Other terms of multitude more specifically suggest evenness; the words **row** and **line** are the ones most commonly used:

CONsequences 75  
 breakFAsT cereal\* 82  
 Oranges before breakFast .. 81  
 crossrow 22, CrowDs 27, highBrows 31, aPone\*Uros\*is 29  
 G-string 33  
 q\*Uartet 74 [suber] [q = queue]  
 Maligned 42  
 anlline 29, isaBELLline 29, DandElion\* 34, Clo\*theSline 37  
 OOO: rings central information 82  
 aT all evenTs 39, evenTs 43, Hampers and SlowS even StopS 64